

THE HOOSIER RESPONDER

AUGUST 2025



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- Highlighting the value of the Professional Emergency Manager Program
- Morgan County EMA helping to shape the future of Public Assistance with FEMA
- IDHS EMS Division debuts state-of-the-art mobile simulation lab
- Emergency Alert Task Force evaluating emergency warning systems in Indiana
- Hundreds of Hoosier teens prepared to hit the road thanks to Traffic Safety Day



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we consider the flash flood events that occurred across Texas and New Mexico, I am reminded that we are easily moments away from requests for help. I am thankful for our Hoosiers on Task Force 1 who are committed to being ready to serve in these rapid deployments. These moments, where preparation meets opportunity, are where we find responsibility. These are defining moments for the responders, but also for those whom they serve.

I am aware of how many people it takes to get prepared to serve. Whether it is someone preparing a training plan, teaching, determining logistical requirements, ensuring supplies are in the proper place or making sure we are abiding by the laws, rules and regulations, every part is critical. Thank you to each of you who are involved in this process!

Since the last time we connected, I have spent time learning more about our public safety infrastructure across the state. Some key takeaways for me were how similar the military mindset and the first responder mindset are. There is a sense of running towards danger, the complete antithesis of the learned behaviors from our childhood. I respect that there is a sense of purpose that is greater than the individual. Also, I appreciate the culture embedded in every teammate. Each person is proud to serve alongside the person next to them and trusts that the person next to them is ready to serve as well.

Finally, I appreciate how the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood are long-term. People will continue to share the department names in their past with as much pride as their current department. There is no doubt in my mind that fire/police/EMS public servants are in a profession, not a career.

It is an honor to serve you all. Thank you.



Jennifer-Ruth Green
Secretary of Public Safety
Executive Director, IDHS



DAYS OF THEIR LIVES

EMA DIRECTORS SHARE WHAT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LIFE IS LIKE



AARON BYE

Crawford County EMA Director since 2019

Being an EMA director means Aaron Bye is always on call. His phone is on 24/7/365. Check that: Both his work phone and his personal phone stay on, since emergency calls will come to both. His job follows him even during his time to get away from it.

“When I’m on vacation, both phones and my laptop go with me. Volunteers can respond if needed, but the first call is always going to me,” Bye said. “If it’s a large enough incident, my vacation has to end, and I have to go back home.”

As soon as Bye wakes up each day, he checks his phone, computer and radio for communications that occurred while he was sleeping — all before he even thinks about going into the office. When he gets to the office, he addresses immediate needs and begins monitoring weather conditions so that the county can prepare in advance for whatever may come that day.

Depending on the time of year, a normal day could involve reviewing planning documents or working on reports (HIRA, THIRA, SPR, SEAR events reporting). In the summer, somehow life gets even busier.

There are two large events in the county he assists with: a 5k and fireworks show on the Fourth of July and a multiday festival in late August. He supports their safety with command and communications, traffic control and having trained EMS staff on hand to handle any medical needs.

Bye also oversees the county’s four radio tower repeaters and 12 warning sirens. He is the one who goes out to visit them and handle maintenance if needed — tackling bugs, weeds and grass.

“It can be a lot. The weather can put you behind, especially when it can take a whole day to clear two or three sites,” Bye said.

In addition to being an EMA director with some groundskeeping duties, Bye is also the county floodplain manager, ADA coordinator, LEPC



chairperson and the District 10 alliance chairperson. With all the fire departments in the county being volunteer departments with few staff and low bandwidth during the daytime, Bye provides support for them too.

“If there’s a fire in the county somewhere, I’ll be responding to it. If there are any multiagency or large-scale incidents, I have to go. This includes search and rescues or specialty-type responses. It also includes any fires that have occupants because, if they are displaced, I’ll need to coordinate Red Cross assistance to help them recover,” Bye said.



BARB LEHRMAN

Adams County EMA Director since 2022

Barb Lehrman has been in emergency management for more than a decade and has spent the past few years as the director of Adams County EMA. She and her deputy maintain more than 25 plans for the county, so any given day may find them working on those because they must be updated on a regular basis. That is, until the phone rings.

“You always have a plan for what you’ll be doing that day, but a spill, accident or any type of incident could happen, and then your plan goes to the next day,” Lehrman said. “Our EMA office is with the sheriff’s department and dispatch center, so anything that comes through, we hear about immediately.”

In the past few years, Lehrman said there have been train derailments and chemical spills that she has helped manage. Shortly after becoming director, a local industrial company’s equipment failed causing three chemicals to mix. It was anyone’s guess whether this new mixture was hazardous, so local law enforcement evacuated homes in the area. She set up incident command at a nearby church and called for assistance from the state and the Fort Wayne Hazmat Response Team to try to assess the situation (eventually determined to be safe).

Another incident occurred last year when two semi tractor-trailers had a head-on collision on U.S. 33 and leaked fluid. It was a daylong event to coordinate with a cleanup crew from Indianapolis to make sure it was contained and removed.

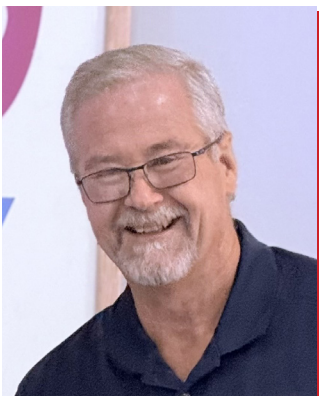
“There are a lot of stakeholders to get ahold of to support us,” Lehrman said. “Every hazmat spill is a little bit different, and you can’t just do one and think you know just what to do.”

Like many counties, tight budgets dictate the need for creative solutions. A local business is currently helping to build and outfit a new incident command trailer for the EMA. The lack of county staff also means Lehrman and her deputy are the ones out checking river gauges along the Wabash and St. Marys rivers to make sure they are working.

“You have to be careful not to fall because you have to go find them walking through the weeds on the riverbank,” she said.

Among many meetings each month, Lehrman visits with a group of Indiana and Ohio counties regularly, forming relationships and resolving problems like radio transmission issues. The 2024 total solar eclipse spurred a lot of collaboration among those counties, as well as the local business community, which helped promote the EMA’s safety messages.

“We were overly prepared and there were no incidents, so everybody was proud,” she said.



MARK O'HEIR

Vermillion County EMA Director since 2009

Before Mark O'Heir was an EMA director, he had a two-decade career with the U.S. Coast Guard, traveling the world working on land-based navigation. There he learned discipline, management and response procedures — all useful for a second career in emergency management.

O'Heir now stands at the ready each day, listening to his radio, keeping in touch with the police and fire departments that inform him of whatever situation is occurring. Sometimes he deploys to scenes of incidents to be on hand in case he or any of the EMA assets might be needed, or just so someone can be there and able to write up an after-action report to improve future responses.

With fewer than 16,000 residents, Vermillion County is one of Indiana's smallest counties, meaning operations are lean. O'Heir is a staff of one and takes on additional duties for the county as needed.

"I've got my hands in everything," he said.

Case in point: Last year, his county's EMS provider gave notice that it would be shutting down, so that forced the county to plan a new EMS service in six months' time. It was not in O'Heir's job description to find the replacement, but he and the commissioners worked to find a solution. He went to work procuring all new ambulances, equipment and supplies and also worked on a deal with neighboring Parke County EMS to staff and manage the new service.

The service started operations right on time, and in some respects, the arrangement has been working even better than before, reducing response times by almost half in some areas.



"A lot of people helped make it happen," O'Heir said.

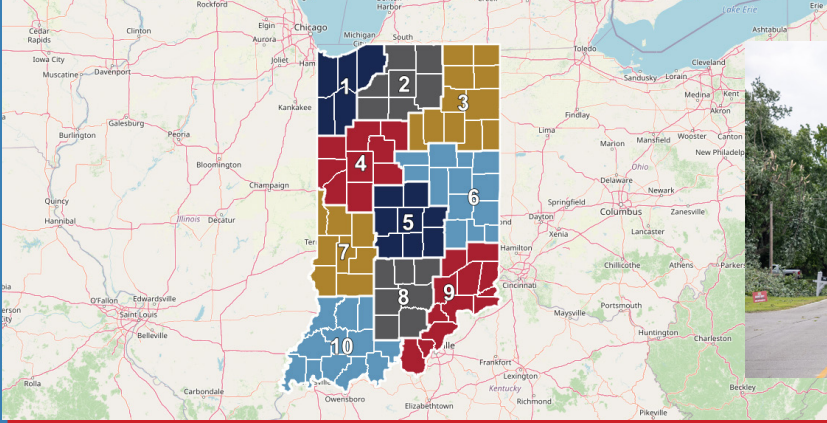
People are what O'Heir considers his job to be all about. Meeting people is his favorite part of being an EMA director, and he does that a lot — spending time with firefighters, police officers, jail staff, public works personnel, mayor's office officials, highway department workers and so on.

"Over time you meet so many people, and that's the best part of the job," he said.

**NATIONAL
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
AWARENESS
MONTH**

FIND YOUR EMA USING THE IDHS CONTACTS MAP

Learn how to reach your county EMA director using the [EMA Contacts Map](#)! It provides the name and contact information for each one, as well as the office's website and social media channel if available.



PUBLIC SAFETY JOB POSTINGS DASHBOARD

Is your agency hiring, or are you looking for a new job opportunity?

Take advantage of the free public safety jobs dashboard offered by IDHS. It promotes available jobs around Indiana in emergency management, 911, fire and EMS. The easy-to-use map had more than 100 jobs and was viewed more than 40,000 times last year alone!

Post a new job opening for free or explore the job openings today.

Job Title: Paramedic/EMT Adjunct Lab Instructor

Job Type: EMS

Deadline: 6/9/2025

Company/Department:

School of EMS
Multiple locations
, Indiana
Allen County

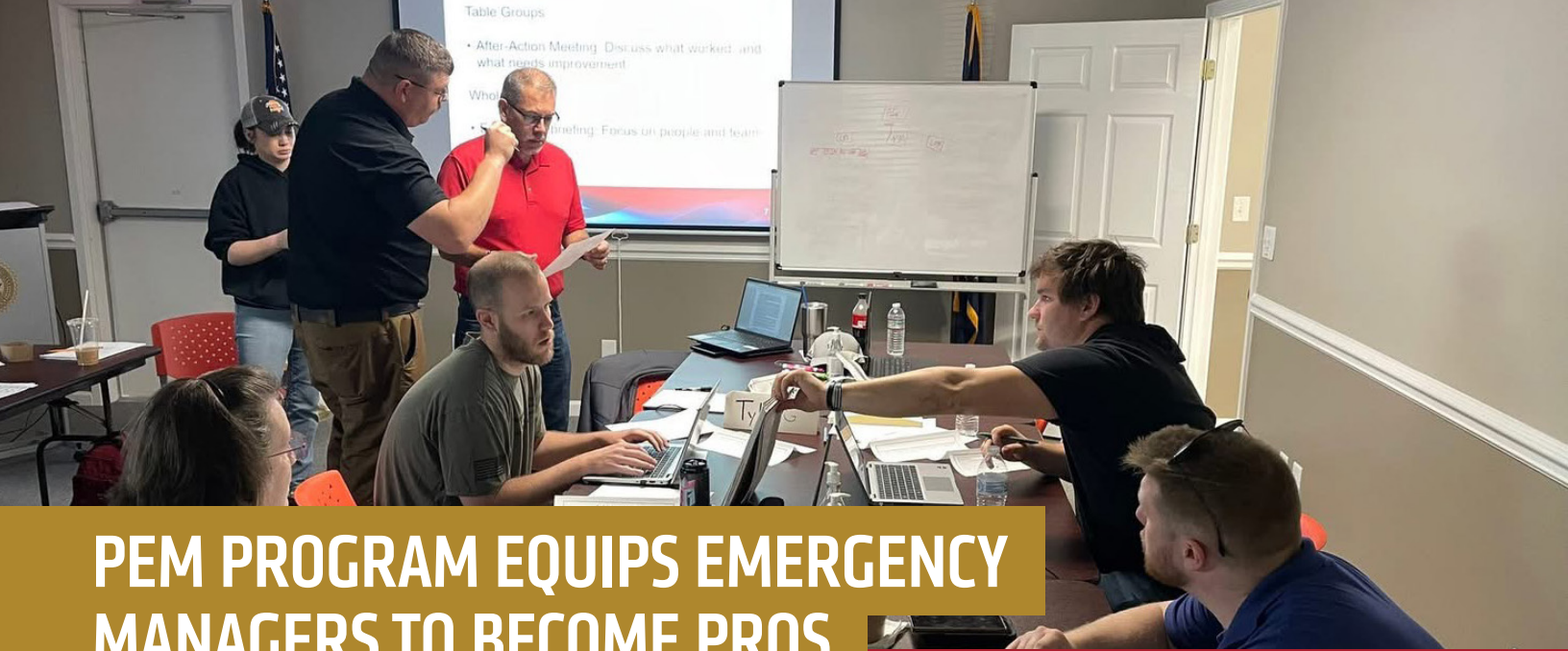
Example job posting

Job Description/Details:

The Adjunct Lab Instructor is responsible for providing high-quality skills instruction and scenario facilitation during live sessions. MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: • Provides live skills and scenario instruction during lab classes. • Supports the mission vision and values of the school to outside agencies. Works closely with the primary instructor and SOE lead. • Grades students.

VIEW THE DASHBOARD





PEM PROGRAM EQUIPS EMERGENCY MANAGERS TO BECOME PROS

The Professional Emergency Manager (PEM) Program is Indiana's certification program to raise and maintain professional standards in emergency management. Interested individuals complete a series of courses, exercises, professional contributions and work experience requirements to become PEM certified.

"The more you train, the more you learn — and relearn — because we know that if you don't use it, you lose it, and the PEM Program solidifies that," said IDHS Emergency Management Training Program Manager Justin Stump, who manages the program.

Nearly 70 emergency managers are currently PEM certified, with 130 having been certified in the past four years.

Huntington County Deputy EMA Director Thomas Fuller earned

his PEM certificate this summer. He has been with the county EMA for two years and heard about the PEM Program from his director, Robert Jeffers, who gave Fuller a packet of information that contained all the things that Jeffers has learned over the years and wishes he had when he started, including information about PEM.

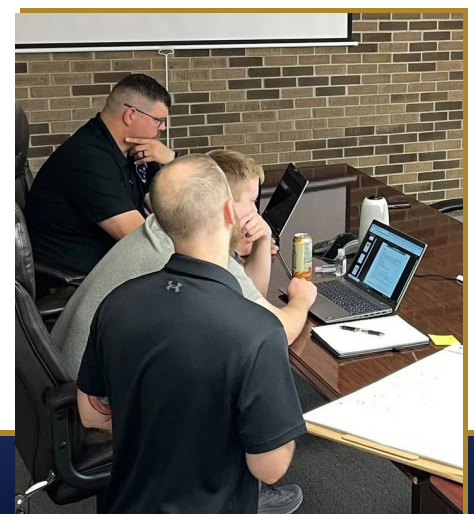
"Not only was it a requirement for my position, but also I realized it would really help me with my professional development, and help me with the community and partners," said Fuller, who credited management for helping him earn the certification. "You have to have the support of your director and elected officials. Having a good support system is important because you will not be able to get it all done without their help."

Dubois County EMA Deputy Director Narissa Zink began her

emergency management career with the county in 2020. From the beginning, she knew she wanted to get her PEM certification, like her director, Tammy Humbert.

"It is who we are," Zink said. "We are emergency managers, and I really wanted to make sure I had the level of education to be a professional emergency manager. I wanted to expand my knowledge and know as much as I can about this career."

The COVID-19 pandemic hampered her progress toward the PEM, but "slowly and steadily" she worked on the program over the



past few years as IDHS offered the required classes around the state, finally earning her certificate this summer.

“If you put in the time and hard work, you can achieve it. The only challenge is real events do not stop happening in the world — whether it be tornadoes, floods, pandemics, ice and snowstorms, etc.,” said Zink, who added she appreciated all the classes that she took. “A lot of the instructors came from different backgrounds, like universities. They may have started out in the government but moved to the university and can talk about both perspectives.”

Zink mentioned the Foundations of Emergency Management and the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) courses as standouts. The HSEEP one was helpful because Zink is also the exercise officer for the county’s LEPC, and so she can use the exercise principles from that course to make their events HSEEP compliant.

The Public Information and Warning class was a big eye-opener for Fuller and provided him with resources he could use as the person who runs his county’s alert program. He discovered the FEMA Watch Desk daily ops updates and got signed up.

“The Foundations course gave a nice history and helped me understand why we do the things we do today. It really helped me fill the gap of ‘why,’” he said. “The

Science of Disasters course was good because it went into the disasters of the past and provided basic terms that not everyone gets to know. It was helpful for those of us without weather experience.”

Stump used to be the Noble County EMA director and started getting his PEM at that time,



finishing it later while at IDHS. He called it a great experience but acknowledged it can be tough for smaller county EMA offices to achieve due to funding and the ability to travel to courses.

“Being a past EMA director, I tell people, if there is no line item for training in your budget, get in touch with your county commissioners and get one put in place,” he said.

Part of the PEM includes selecting six contributions to the profession from a list of 19 choices. Contributions could include conducting a hazard analysis of

your jurisdiction, county exercises, assisting in the design of standard operating procedures and more. Stump said the list may seem overwhelming at first, but it should be doable.

Sometimes, there is confusion about the FEMA Basic Academy courses that are required. Stump

said those do not need to be taken in any particular order and that FEMA certificates never expire, so students do not need to retake them.

Fuller and Zink both recommended that other emergency managers should go through the program and shared the feeling that emergency management is a never-ending field to explore.

“You can never learn too much, and there is always something new to learn. My EMA director told me, ‘You need to keep learning and never stop learning because things change every day,’” Fuller said.



MORGAN COUNTY EMA DIRECTOR NAMED TO NATIONAL FEMA COMMITTEE, STRENGTHENING INDIANA'S VOICE

For the first time, an Indiana emergency manager will have a voice on one of FEMA's most influential advisory bodies for disaster recovery. Morgan County EMA Director Abby Worth (pictured above, center) was appointed to the FEMA Public Assistance Steering Committee, representing all of Region 5, which includes six Midwestern states. Her nomination and selection mark a milestone for Indiana and come during Emergency Management Awareness Month, offering a timely tribute to the dedication and talent of emergency managers across the country.

The FEMA Public Assistance Steering Committee is designed to bring together local, tribal, territorial and state perspectives to advise FEMA on improving the Public Assistance program. The program is responsible for helping jurisdictions recover from disasters by reimbursing eligible expenses for emergency response, debris removal and infrastructure repair.

"The committee is really about improving the public assistance process," Worth said. "It is meant to be more user-friendly for emergency managers, which in turn helps support the local economy and local jurisdictions as they recover."

Worth, who began her career in public safety as a teenager, worked in EMS and fire service before stepping into her role at the Morgan County EMA. What started as a temporary administrative role quickly became a calling. "It was a unique way to blend everything I had done in public safety and continue serving the community," she said.

Lacy Foy, an emergency preparedness specialist in the IDHS Recovery Section, was one of the individuals who nominated Worth. Foy praised Worth's tireless commitment to learning the public assistance program and her deep dedication to the people of Morgan County.

"She is always reaching out, asking questions, thinking through new ideas and taking initiative," Foy said. "She has an unwavering commitment to her community and is constantly thinking outside the box to deliver meaningful results."

Foy added that Worth's experience and leadership stand out in a field full of hardworking professionals. "Abby has gone from zero to 100 in terms of mastering the public assistance program," she said. "She advocates for her

community and strengthens local preparedness and recovery systems.”

Worth’s recent work includes spearheading planning efforts that involved stakeholders across the county and state, ensuring that emergency operations center staff were trained and comfortable in their roles and refining emergency plans based on lessons learned from recent disasters.

“We have gone through quite a few weather incidents,” Worth said. “Every single one is a learning experience. We debrief, make changes and get better every time.”

The FEMA committee meets regularly and hosts an in-person workshop to assess current challenges, policy changes and possible improvements to the public assistance process. Worth believes her presence can help bridge a gap that local emergency managers often experience when working with state and federal counterparts.

“There is not always an easy path for local voices to be heard,” said Worth. “This is a direct line where we can share what we have seen, where the barriers are and hopefully help create solutions.”

Foy believes Worth’s insight, directness and collaborative approach will be especially impactful. “She brings a perspective that represents not just Morgan County but all of Indiana,” explained Foy. “Our state is really unique in how we operate. We have a strong mutual aid system, a mix of rural and urban counties, and we experience a wide variety of disasters.”

Indiana’s diversity, both demographically and geographically, gives Worth an essential lens through which to view national disaster policy. “We have tornadoes, snowstorms, hazardous material spills and even earthquakes,” Foy said.

“Having someone from Indiana on the committee is going to bring a fresh voice and real-world perspective to national recovery policy.”

Worth views the opportunity as both humbling and motivating.

“Coming from small-town Indiana, it is easy to wonder if you can make an impact on a large scale, but I am really excited to be part of something bigger and to represent not just my county, but emergency managers across the state and country,” said Worth.

Foy echoed that sentiment.

“This reflects the high level of Emergency Management talent and leadership we have in Indiana,” said Foy. “We are delivering high-quality work and now we have a seat at the table.”

Worth hopes her involvement will ultimately improve the public assistance process for all emergency managers, especially those in small offices with limited support. “This process needs to be accessible and doable for every type of office,” she said. “If we can make it more efficient, more understandable and more supportive, then that is a win for everyone.”



INDIANA LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY



Photo credits: ILEA Facebook page

ILEA GRADUATING NEW CLASS OF HIGHLY-TRAINED OFFICERS

Indiana gained a new group of highly-trained police officers in late August. The Indiana Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) celebrated the graduation of its 236th Basic Class of officers.

These officers lived at ILEA for 16 weeks, immersing themselves in the many aspects of being a police officer. It is more than just putting on a uniform and getting in the car.

ILEA puts these officers to the test, inside the classroom and out in a simulated environment. They sit through courses in criminal law, traffic law, firearm safety, defensive driving tactics, education on mental illness and even how to write reports once they get back to the station.

"We teach hard skills like defensive tactics, how to shoot a

firearm, when to shoot a firearm," explained ILEA Executive Director Timothy Horty. "Then they go through 80 hours of criminal law, as well as report writing, physical fitness standards, de-escalation, building searches, traffic stops and many other skills."

Horty went on to explain how officers are taught de-escalation tactics and more. All of the topics contain important knowledge for the officers to take to heart and act on when they get to their jurisdiction.

"Going through the mental exercise of when to raise the level of force and when to de-escalate the level of force," said Officer Gamaliel Ortiz. "All of those things play into everyday scenarios that will be put in when we leave this place."

Once the officers learn those skills in the classroom, they put those skills into action. ILEA creates high-intensity scenarios where the officers have to rely on that training to make the correct decision in a controlled environment called Burch Village.

This newly renovated building is 41,000 square feet and houses an indoor strip mall, where police officers can act out responding to an incident at a convenience store, a gun store, a liquor store and more. This building was designed to be able to alter the scenario to the focus of the class that day.

"Burch Village is sort of the crown jewel of what we have done with our new renovation project. We have been blessed with \$96 million from the legislature to rebuild this law enforcement campus," said Horty.

The scenarios begin with low-intensity interactions, but that changes over time.

“We build that crescendo of intensity intentionally,” explained Horthy. “We put them in situations where every day we increase the intensity; we turn up the stress-induced scenario with them on purpose.”

The thought process is that if stress is induced in a controlled environment, officers will already know the correct actions to take in the field. “The whole idea is to instill some discipline in them so that when they do get into a stressful situation, they don’t lose their composure,” added Horthy.

“The stress and the heightened level of awareness is something that we needed to develop. They create the stress in other ways throughout the course of the Academy in order to inoculate us so that way instead of having a response of freezing or even the flight response, we’re ready to engage and do our jobs,” said Ortiz.



Ortiz said an added benefit is that the officers got to learn how to work together. “Many of us are going to be working with partners or other officers that are going to be on the same shift, and we have each other’s backs. Being able to adapt to the different styles and the different ways of being able to work together and getting all on the same page in order to accomplish tasks together has been very valuable as well.”

Going through those scenarios also helped the officers in the class create connections that will last outside of ILEA.

“Very quickly, the hardship and the stress of the environment created camaraderie between us as classmates and just having a

genuine desire to see each other succeed,” said Officer Gamaliel Ortiz. “We’re exchanging numbers and different things that others bring to the table that will help you do your job better.”

For example, Ortiz speaks several languages and gave out his phone number to his trainers and classmates, offering up translation assistance if other officers need it.

After graduation on Aug. 22, the officers went back to their jurisdictions to work in the field. Many will continue their training in their department.

“I am feeling confident in what I’ve learned here, but then also knowing that I have a month of being able to put that into practice while still under supervision in the actual setting that I will be in makes me feel even more confident,” said Ortiz, who is now working with the Purdue University Police Department.

“I want the public to know that we are doing the absolute best we can to train these young men and women to go back out to their communities, to do good things and protect them,” said Horthy.





PRIORITIZING SCHOOL SAFETY

WITH LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND A NEW HOME
FOR THE OFFICE OF SCHOOL SAFETY



SINCE

the inception of the School Safety Specialist Academy in 1999, Indiana has been a national leader in school safety when it comes to legislation and training. Following the tragic Columbine High School shooting in 1999, the Indiana General Assembly decided to focus on the security and safety of Hoosier students and teachers at schools. In the 25 years that have passed since, Indiana has led the charge with a variety of legislation ranging from implementing school safety plans to creating the secured school safety grant to curriculum for school safety specialist training.

Indiana's 52nd Governor, Mike Braun, prioritized creating a new Indiana Office of School Safety to the 2025 General Assembly, calling it a "[one-stop shop](#)" for all things school safety. On July 1, [HEA 1637](#) became effective, officially establishing the Office of School Safety

within IDHS. This move took the Office of School Safety from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and moved it under the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), where the Secured School Safety Board (SSSB) and [Secured School Safety Grant \(SSSG\)](#) were already operating.

IDHS specializes in emergency response and preparedness, including planning, training, response and recovery. All of this, along with the SSSG and SSSB, makes IDHS the perfect new home for the Office of School Safety; truly the "one-stop shop" that Governor Braun envisioned.

"The Secured School Safety Grant is a resource for Indiana schools to address their own safety needs. The SSSG program has been instrumental in creating safer school environments by providing resources for a multi-

layered approach to security, which includes enhancing physical security, trained personnel and comprehensive threat assessments,” said IDHS Grants Section Chief Kim Snyder.

The SSSG program was created in 2013 and codified by [Indiana Code 10-21](#) to increase the safety of Indiana schools. In fiscal year 2025, the SSSG program provided funding to 499 schools for a total of over \$24 million. This year, the total grant amount increased to \$27 million. Snyder’s team received 502 applications, requesting a total of \$32 million this year. They are tasked with making a recommendation to the Secured School Safety Board in order for Hoosier schools to begin their programs to enhance school safety on Sept. 2. These projects can take on a variety of forms, from funding a school resource officer to implementing a bullying prevention program to enhancing the physical security of school property.

The SSSB also was established in 2013, with its main purpose being to approve or deny SSSG program applications. Members range from first responders to school corporation

applications for a total of over \$180 million in grant funds since its inception.



“The Secured School Safety Board takes their role and responsibility in school safety seriously, as evidenced by the amount of dollars they have approved to assist in ensuring the safety of our school staff and students. Their efforts show that school safety is a priority here in the Hoosier state,” said Rusty Goodpaster, director of the Secured School Safety Board.

Along with the SSSB and the IDHS team that administers the SSSG, the Office of School Safety provides training, curriculum and resources, reviews school safety plans and conducts site assessments.

Ryan Stewart, one of the school safety specialists who made the move from IDOE to IDHS to continue with the Office of School Safety, has been with the office since 2004.

“Over 20 years, it’s amazing to see how far we’ve come,” said Stewart. [Per Indiana Code](#), each school corporation is required to have one school safety specialist, which would equate to about 350 specialists. “Our school safety training started with about 500 specialists, and today we have 3,500 school safety specialists trained across the State of Indiana,” Stewart



employees and representatives from the Criminal Justice Institute and State Police. To date, the board has approved over 4,100

said. It is a testament to both the commitment of teachers and faculty to school safety, as well as the high level of training the Office of School Safety is providing.

Training is not the only service that the office provides; schools across Indiana have various needs. “It is not a one-size-fits-all approach. There’s nuance required to fit the different needs of schools and communities,” noted Deanna Thomas, another school safety specialist at IDHS.

School safety specialists put in the legwork to provide schools across the state with a framework of best practices from logistics to reunification plans, and how to handle bus crashes and power failures. The programs and resources have evolved over time, too. Stewart emphasized how social media has become a big part of life for students, which challenged the team to transform training and resources to include information about cyberbullying.

Building on IDOE’s efforts, IDHS sought a director to lead the newly established Office of School Safety. Julie Q. Smith is a dedicated public servant, spending the last 20 years as a law enforcement officer with the Columbus Police Department, most recently serving as the supervisor of the School Resource Officer Division. She has a passion for keeping students safe, having served as president of the Indiana School Resource Officers Association.

“My vision is for the Office of School Safety is to be more than just a resource; it should be a visible, active partner to school districts across the state,” Smith said. “That means showing up. It means having boots on the ground, addressing real problems in real time. I want us to deliver best practice recommendations, assist in emergency operations planning and provide direct feedback on execution. Just as importantly, I want our office to listen. School safety is constantly evolving, and we need to stay ahead by staying connected to the people we serve.”



Julie Q. Smith, Director of the Office of School Safety



With her extensive background in school safety, Smith was able to hit the ground running on day one.

“One of my top priorities is to support the implementation of Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTA) teams, now required by state law. This work demands real collaboration with mental health professionals and clear, actionable guidance for those on the front lines. BTA is a powerful tool when it’s done right, and I want to help districts get it right,” she said.

Building on the mission that began more than 25 years ago, Smith now continues those efforts to keep Hoosier children safe at school.

“This is a pivotal time for school safety in Indiana. I’m honored, and honestly, fired up to work alongside communities, school districts, educators and every parent who sends their child to school each day,” said Smith. “I’m committed to this office and to doing everything possible to make Indiana’s schools safer for everyone.”



TORNADOES
FLOODING
EARTHQUAKES
HOUSE FIRES
DISASTERS
FOLLOW
NO SCHEDULE





THREE BROTHERS STEP UP TO HELP RUN HOMETOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT FROM AFAR

Article submitted by the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association

For the Wineland brothers, service to their community is their higher calling, and volunteering to help run their hometown fire department is a no-brainer for brothers who deeply desire to give back. Today, they can be seen as models of the modern-day volunteer firefighter — proving to the public that there are endless opportunities to put your unique skill set to work through service to your community.

Matthew, Michael and Nicholas Wineland were raised in northwest Indiana with servants' hearts, joining Scouting America as kids, eventually achieving the rank of Eagle Scouts as teens, and playing active roles in their church community. That heart of service stuck. Even as these now-adult brothers followed careers across

the country, they continue to donate hours of their time each week to the Liberty Township Volunteer Fire Department in their hometown of Valparaiso.

"Our family has roots in the department, as my great uncle was Assistant Chief of the department in the 1970s," said the oldest brother, Michael, who now holds the Assistant Fire Chief title on top of his full-time job outside of the fire service. "I started at the department in March of 2009. I spent numerous late nights going to training each week. All during this time, I was a full-time college student and working full time. It was a lot to take on, but after 16 years, it was well worth it."

Following in their older brother's footsteps, twin brothers

Matthew and Nicholas joined the department as volunteers in 2011, even as both of their full-time careers took them across the country. Matthew lives in New Mexico and works full time for the National Park Service, yet he continues to serve his hometown department by handling administrative duties like grant writing, IT and serving as the department's Public Information Officer (PIO).

"Having spoken with several new recruits over the years, I have always said there is a job for everyone," said Matthew. "Everyone brings unique experiences and skills that we need to function."

Nicholas also works as a park ranger for the National Park

Service, but in Colorado. Still, Nicholas gives back hours of his week to his hometown of Valparaiso by developing policy, organizing events and coordinating projects to ensure deadlines are met.

The two brothers, while out of state, have been able to secure funding for equipment through grants and have grown their department's social media following, where they engage with media and members of the community.

"The fire service has had tremendous impacts on my life, such as being more social and pushing myself to learn new tasks," said Nicholas. "Since serving as the corporation president for the majority of my time, it has taught me invaluable skills that I use in my full-time employment, such as people skills, working with outside stakeholders and improving services for our service area."

Altogether, the Winelands each give roughly 40 volunteer hours a week back to Liberty Township, which not only helps service a

growing population in Valparaiso, but also saves the taxpayers money by not staffing career firefighters.

"When I first started volunteering as a firefighter, the department responded to around 500 calls a year," said Michael. "That number is now up to around 1,100."

Across the country, especially in states like Indiana where nearly 80 percent of first responders are volunteers, finding the right folks to do the job is a challenge. Liberty Township Fire is one of more than 800 volunteer and fire rescue departments in Indiana. Keeping the trucks fully staffed ensures all families, including ones in rural areas, can get help when they need it most — and when every minute matters in an emergency.



The Winelands provide a powerful blueprint for the next generation of volunteer firefighting, showing that heroism encompasses far more than running into burning buildings. Essential contributions can come from many different roles performed both at the fireground and far from it.

Departments need to get creative in today's world and establish new roles, including new front-line positions such as EMTs and Emergency Response Support, but also administration positions such as maintenance positions, fundraisers, grant writers and fire prevention educators. These types of members are essential to the team and can help alleviate the burden from those going on runs and responding to emergencies.

This past year, the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA) teamed up with the International Association of Fire Chiefs through a FEMA SAFER grant to explore ways to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters, and through that process, the IFCA learned that departments need all different types of support to help them step up and respond to their communities.



Photos courtesy of Liberty Township Fire

EMS UPDATES



All EMS certification levels impacted by changes to EMS requirements

New requirements were added for both the initial certification and recertification for EMRs, EMTs, advanced EMTs and paramedics.

The requirements are:

1. Mental health and well-being education
2. Traffic incident management (TIM) education

Mental Health and Well-Being Basic Education

Pursuant to [Ind. Code 16-31-3-2 \(E\)](#), mental health and wellness basic training was added by the legislature for licensure requirements for all certified people and directed the EMS Commission to establish standards.

On March 14, 2025, the EMS Commission voted to add three (3) responder mental health training courses to the issuance and renewal process of EMS certifications.

These courses have been added into Acadis under the following titles:

1. Psychological Health – Psychological Health Toolkit
2. Psychological Health – Resilience & the Mind-Body Connection
3. Psychological Health – Suicide Awareness

Any EMS certification (EMR, EMT, advanced EMT and paramedic) approved after July 1, 2025, are required to start completing these courses.

Any EMS recertification after Jan. 1, 2026, is required to complete these courses or

equivalent material that meets the statutory equivalents listed in [Ind. Code 16-31-3-2](#).

These three (3) courses or equivalent must be completed again within every certification cycle, every two (2) years. These courses do not create additional hour requirements to the current recertification hour requirements but clarify what should be done within the existing hours framework. These courses do count toward the total recertification hours requirements.

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Education

Completion of the National Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Responder Training, developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is mandatory for both initial EMS certification and recertification in Indiana.

This action joins many other states in requiring TIM training to reduce secondary crashes and fatalities among emergency responders on roadways.

EMS professionals may complete this requirement using one of the following three approved options:

1. Indiana Acadis Portal – Online, self-paced version of the TIM course
2. FHWA National Highway Institute (NHI) – Online, self-paced training
3. In-person classroom training – Instructor-led session

Important: If training is completed outside of Acadis (NHI or in-person), the certificate of completion must be submitted to emscertifications@dhs.in.gov. Instructors may also submit class rosters for in-person sessions.

Please contact the EMS Certifications Section at emscertifications@dhs.in.gov if you have any questions.

NEW EMS TOOL CROSSING THE STATE



The Indiana EMS Division within IDHS launched a new learning tool for EMS personnel this year. The EMS Mobile Simulation Laboratory (Sim Lab) received a major upgrade. A trailer was outfitted to mimic the cabin of an EMS ambulance to give EMS personnel hands-on experience to simulate real-world emergencies.



Along with the new vehicle comes new high-fidelity manikins. These manikins can have conversations and mimic breathing and pulse rates.

Check out the video to learn more about this immersive learning opportunity that is free for Hoosier EMS personnel.



REQUEST THE EMS MOBILE SIM LAB



WABASH VALLEY FULL-SCALE EXERCISE SHAKES THINGS UP

Nearly 300 participants came together over two days in June and across multiple locations to test their response capabilities in the event of a major earthquake striking the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone. Now evaluators are compiling their thoughts on how IDHS teammates, state counterparts and external participants performed in the Awakening of the Wabash Full-Scale Exercise.

The exercise challenged emergency preparedness personnel to work through their actions if a 7.5 magnitude earthquake were to occur in the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone. Teams were established in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), located in the Indiana Government Center South building, and the Indiana State Fairgrounds.

Numerous components were happening simultaneously. While the SEOC worked through its actions, teams like the Indiana Management Assistance Team and the Indiana Building Emergency Assessment and Monitoring Team



were playing their role, getting practice managing an incident in the field and inspecting buildings for safety.

The exercise began immediately after the earthquake struck. It was looking dire and chaotic (by design).

“A lot of successes and big things happened during this exercise. I look forward to reviewing all the data we have collected and developing the after-action report,” said State Exercise Officer Ashley Baldwin.

Emergency Management and Preparedness Director Mary Moran echoed the praise: “The whole emergency management branch came together to make this a very successful, well-organized exercise. I got so much good feedback. I am so very humbled to work with all of you. You are truly treasures for the state!”



GOVERNOR BRAUN FORMS EMERGENCY ALERT TASK FORCE

Governor Braun’s emergency alert task force is on track with its mission to evaluate the current alert and warning systems in Indiana that are used to notify residents and visitors of immediate threats to life and safety. The task force plans to provide recommendations to improve emergency alerting protocols, systems and technology prepared for the governor by Nov. 1.

“Following the tragic loss of life from flooding in Texas, we’re taking proactive action to make sure our emergency alert systems are up-to-date, fully functional, and that we’re making any enhancements possible to better protect Hoosiers from extreme weather,” Governor Mike Braun said in a statement.

In the first meeting in early August, the task force created a list of questions to survey local counties to get a better idea of the systems currently in place and how they are being used. The task force will take that information and identify what is working, what is not working and what new technology is available to help.

The task force is led by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and the Integrated Public Safety Commission, with input from municipal and county officials from fire and law enforcement, as well as advisors from the Indiana Geographic Information Office, National Weather Service and cell-phone network carriers.

The task force encourages public input throughout this process and will be livestreaming the meetings, available to view [here](#). Meetings will be held every other Wednesday through Sept. 17, 2025, from 10 a.m. to noon ET.



CONFIDENT AND SAFE DRIVERS

INDIANA CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE HOSTS TRAFFIC SAFETY DAY

Hundreds of teen drivers are hitting the road with new confidence behind the wheel. The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) hosted the second annual [Traffic Safety Day](#) at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The event offered teen drivers and their families workshops, demonstrations and interactive experiences to help them make better decisions on the road.

“This is really an opportunity for teen drivers to come out and gain hands-on, real-world experience,” said ICJI Executive Director Douglas Huntsinger.



“Teenagers under 20 are three times more likely to be involved in a fatal accident than those over 20. I think if we can help them develop skills, it will make them more confident on the road and make them more aware of their surroundings.”

Twenty-five stations were set up, each with a different goal in mind. A stationary motorcycle simulation, hosted by the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, offered teens the chance to sit on a running motorcycle and learn the basics.

“It gives young riders the chance to experience driving a motorcycle, including starting it, engaging the clutch and shifting gears, in a safe and controlled environment,” described BMV Representative Rachael Henderson.

Another station placed teens behind the steering wheel during a traffic stop.

“One of my favorite things is this traffic stop,” explained Huntsinger. “We have the State Police and

the sheriff's department partners walk kids through the traffic stop to simulate what to do."

The goal was to help teens learn what they should and should not do during a traffic stop to make sure everyone stays calm and safe.

The State Police also walked away from the event learning more about the newest drivers in the state.

"Just like we're helping our teenagers have the understanding of what the situation on the road is like, we also know that we're helping our law enforcement agencies and our partners develop those relationships," said Huntsinger. "It's giving them skills as well. I'm sure they're hearing things that they may not have heard on the road before as they walk kids through a traffic stop."

Additional stations included a controlled braking course, a distracted/impaired driving simulator and a blind spot recognition station. Participants also met racing heroes like IndyCar drivers Josef Newgarden, Conor Daly, Tony Kanaan, Ed Carpenter and more.

This free event, supported by the National Highway Safety Administration, is an extension of the ICJI's Rule the Road teen driving program. [Data shows that Indiana](#) saw a 24% decrease in fatal crashes involving drivers under the age of 21 in 2023 and 2024.

Huntsinger said more can be done. "Since 2022, Indiana has had a three-year reduction in traffic fatalities and so we've proved that awareness programs like this are working, but there are still too many traffic incidents. There's still a lot more work to do."



OUT IN THE FIELD: SECRETARY GREEN ATTENDS FIRE OPS 101

Public Safety Secretary and IDHS Executive Director Jennifer-Ruth Green received hands-on training to get insight into the critical role of Indiana first responders.

In May, she attended the Fire Operations 101 class hosted by Valparaiso Firefighters Local 1124. Firefighters and paramedics guided Green, elected officials and decision-makers through controlled but realistic fire and EMS scenarios.



REP QUARTERLY

Subscribe today to the Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) Quarterly for insight into nuclear preparedness efforts in Indiana and across the industry. Each issue features updates on training and exercises, regulatory changes, stakeholder engagement and best practices from FEMA Region 5 and beyond. It is a great way to stay informed on evolving radiological emergency strategies and connect with the REP community.

[CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE TODAY!](#)





WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS

An IDHS Video Series on First Responder Mental Health

“When the Smoke Clears” is a four-part video series produced by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), discussing the mental health challenges faced by first responders. It provides valuable insights into identifying signs of depression, PTSD and substance abuse within the firefighting community. The videos, led by a panel of experts, promote open conversations about mental health and offer guidance on when to step in and seek professional help.

Departments, leadership and first responders play crucial roles in fostering a supportive environment and prioritizing mental wellness. All public safety personnel are encouraged to watch and share the “When the Smoke Clears” series. Now is an ideal time to focus on the well-being of those who serve on the front lines. The complete series is available on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and the [IDHS First Responder Behavioral Health webpage](#).

To submit a topic idea, please email pio@dhs.in.gov.



INDIANA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN RECEIVES PROMULGATION FROM GOV. MIKE BRAUN

The 2025 [Indiana Emergency Operations Plan \(EOP\)](#) received promulgation from Governor Mike Braun's office and was implemented by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, effective June 1, 2025.

The EOP is an all-hazard, all-threat emergency plan maintained by various jurisdictions across all levels of government. The plan is the foundational document outlining the state's concept of operations for emergency management regarding homeland security preparedness, and response and recovery activities.

The plan becomes actionable when a disaster, emergency or event exhausts, or is anticipated to exhaust, the capacity, capability and resources of local governments. The EOP is supplemented by several hazard and threat-specific annexes and support plans.

Effective emergency response requires a unified effort. To achieve this goal, it is imperative all state agencies, departments and their personnel ensure they are prepared, trained and able to execute their required roles and responsibilities in accordance with this plan. All agencies shall support the state's operational priorities during response and recovery activities:

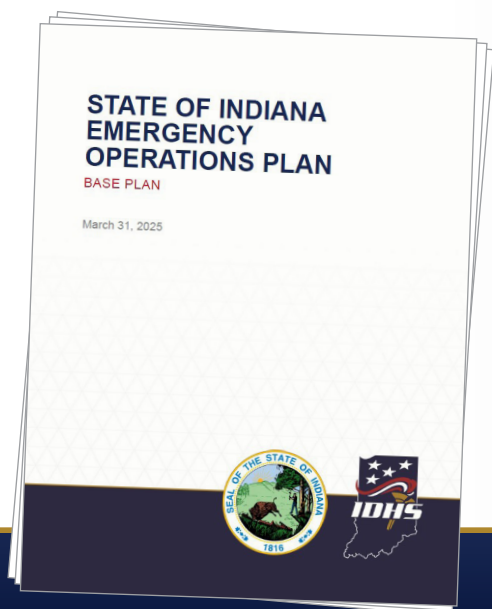
1. Life safety and health (highest priority)
2. Incident stabilization
3. Protection of property, economy and the environment
4. Restoration of essential infrastructure, utilities, functions and services
5. Unity of effort and coordination among appropriate stakeholders

The Indiana Emergency Operations Plan has undergone significant revision since its promulgation in 2022. The plan remains in accordance with existing

federal and state statutes, including Indiana Code 10-14-3, Emergency Management and Disaster Law, and supersedes all previous versions. The plan is more streamlined, actionable and focused on supporting entities. Key changes in this revision include:

- Inclusion of the Office of Public Safety
- Inclusion of Indiana's federally recognized tribal nations
- Inclusion of State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) declarations and federal declarations with Individual Assistance and Public Assistance awards
- Expanded hazardous weather information including historical flooding and tornado data
- Expanded communications information including the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) communications plan, auxiliary communications, current communication methods, and public alert and warning
- Expanded Mitigation and Recovery funding information
- State Emergency Operations Center organization chart updates
- Addition of the eighth Community Lifeline – Water Systems

Feel free to share the EOP with necessary stakeholders and partners.



DISASTER RELIEF UPDATE

In May 2025, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) opened applications for the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) for individual assistance for damage caused by the March 30 through April 9, 2025, severe storms, tornadoes and flooding. Hundreds of applicants in these affected counties applied for individual assistance, and the state has processed over \$200,000 in state disaster relief funds to individuals. Payments will continue to be processed to all eligible applicants who applied prior to the July 30 deadline.

Additionally, IDHS is currently accepting SDRF individual assistance applications for individuals affected by the June 30, 2025, flooding in Daviess County and the May 15 through 16, 2025, severe storms in Monroe and Greene counties. Individuals can [apply here](#) or through the IDHS website.

Federal Disaster Declaration

On July 22, President Trump granted a [Major Disaster Declaration](#) for Indiana for severe storms, straight-

line winds, tornadoes and flooding that occurred from March 30 to April 9, 2025. The federal disaster declaration for public assistance was approved for the following 25 counties: Bartholomew, Brown, Clark, Clay, Crawford, Decatur, Floyd, Franklin, Greene, Harrison, Jefferson, Lawrence, Madison, Marshall, Martin, Montgomery, Morgan, Orange, Owen, Perry, Switzerland, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Warren and Washington counties. These counties were eligible for public assistance because they met a per capita damage threshold.

The FEMA [Public Assistance Program](#) provides assistance to state, local, tribal and territorial governments, and certain types of private nonprofit organizations. This grant funding can be used for emergency work and the repair or replacement of disaster-damaged facilities. Applicants must own the property or be legally responsible for maintaining it.

At the beginning of August, FEMA staff, in conjunction with IDHS Recovery teams, started meeting with public assistance applicants across the state. Project meetings are expected to be completed by the end of August. The next phase in the process is delivering recovery support to Hoosier communities efficiently and effectively.



LISTEN TO THE IDHS PODCAST

In this episode, IDHS discusses how one Indiana county EMA earned a spot on a prestigious FEMA committee that helps guide federal recovery efforts. Learn how her insight, experience and collaboration are influencing the future of disaster assistance across the country.

Listen online at on.in.gov/hoosier-homeland or subscribe to the podcast using one of the podcast services below:





United States
Consumer Product Safety Commission

Fireworks Injuries & Deaths

2024 DATA

#CelebrateSafely

Injuries & Deaths



14,700

people were
treated in ERs
for fireworks injuries in 2024

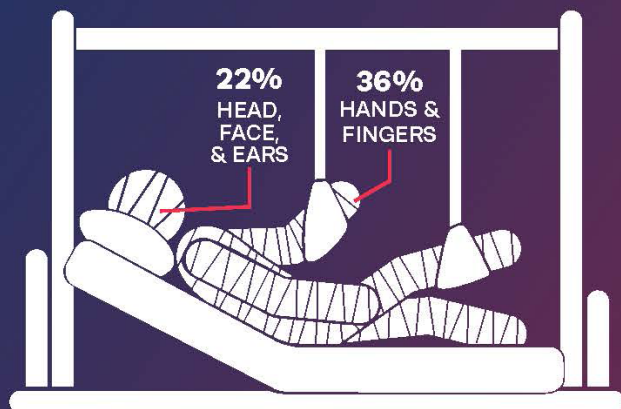
11 Deaths
from Fireworks in 2024



Most Injured Body Parts



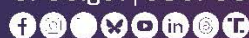
37% of the injuries were
burns



Safety Tips

- ★ Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers.
- ★ Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying or using them.
- ★ Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap.
- ★ Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly.
- ★ Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not ignited fully.
- ★ Never use fireworks while impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- ★ More Fireworks Safety Tips:
[cpsc.gov/fireworks](https://www.cpsc.gov/fireworks)

CPSC.gov | USCPSC



NSN-16-062025

THANK YOU FOR VISITING IDHS AT THE INDIANA STATE FAIR!

Thank you to everyone who stopped by the IDHS booth on the first day of the Indiana State Fair. IDHS employees enjoyed speaking with many of you and teaching about the importance of emergency plans and kits. Fairgoers who stopped by the booth got the chance to complete the Preparedness Passport, where they were quizzed about safety tips they can put into action at home.

The agency's [Get Prepared](#) initiative was the title sponsor for the fair. Everyone should take time to create an emergency plan and talk through that plan with all family members, young and old. Emergency plans prevent panic and save lives.

Learn more on [GetPrepared.in.gov](#).



INDIANA
STATE FAIR



SIGN UP TO



Fires, storms, earthquakes. Power outages, hazardous chemical leaks, car accidents.

Disasters happen and so do all sorts of everyday emergencies — whether you are ready for them or not!

Knowing what to do or having the right supplies at your fingertips can make all the

difference when your sense of normalcy is broken. IDHS aims to help Hoosiers like you **Get Prepared** by sharing tips to stay safe in all kinds of circumstances.

Subscribe now to the Get Prepared Indiana email list so you can receive quarterly reminders on what to get prepared for throughout the year.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE NEWSLETTER NOW!



MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

As Indiana State Fire Marshal, I have witnessed firsthand how the fire service serves as a critical pillar in comprehensive school safety and security initiatives. The relationship between fire departments and educational institutions extends far beyond traditional emergency response, encompassing prevention education, safety planning and collaborative partnerships that create safer learning environments for our children.

The Fire Service's Multifaceted Role

Fire departments bring unique expertise to school safety through several key areas. Our personnel conduct regular fire safety education programs in schools, teaching students essential lifesaving skills including evacuation procedures, fire prevention techniques and emergency response protocols.

The fire service also plays a crucial role in facility assessments and emergency planning. Fire marshals work directly with school administrators to evaluate building safety systems, conduct risk assessments and ensure compliance with fire prevention and building safety codes. These partnerships help identify potential hazards before they become emergencies, creating a foundation of preparedness that protects students, staff and first responders alike.

Enhanced Collaboration and Future Impact

Under House Enrolled Act 1637, fire chiefs or their designees will now serve on county school safety commissions, strengthening the vital connection between fire services and educational safety planning. This enhanced collaboration ensures that fire prevention expertise is integrated into all aspects of school safety planning and implementation.

Indiana's New Office of School Safety: A Game-Changer

I am particularly excited about the establishment of Indiana's new Office of School Safety within the Department of Homeland Security, which became effective July 1, 2025. This groundbreaking initiative represents a significant advancement in how our state coordinates school safety resources and establishes best practices across all educational institutions.

The Office of School Safety will coordinate school safety resources and work with state agencies to determine optimal safety practices for schools. Importantly, this new office will maintain guidelines for school security and emergency response protocols while collecting data from previous school incidents nationwide to develop comprehensive training programs. The legislation specifically requires the office to train and certify school safety specialists, ensuring that every educational facility has access to professional expertise.

The fire service's role in school safety continues to evolve, but our commitment remains constant: protecting Indiana's students through education, prevention and preparedness. With the new Office of School Safety providing coordinated leadership and resources, I am confident that we will continue advancing school safety standards across our state. Together, we are building safer schools and stronger communities for all Hoosiers.


Stephen Jones
Indiana State Fire Marshal



UPCOMING TRAININGS

SEPTEMBER

SEPT 16-17	Disaster Preparedness for Hospitals & Healthcare Organizations within the Community Infrastructure (MGT-341)	FORT WAYNE
SEPT 23-24	EOC Operations & Planning for All Hazards (MGT-346)	TERRE HAUTE
SEPT 23-24	Tank Car Specialist (PER-290)	PUEBLO, CO
SEPT 24	Disaster Recovery in Rural Communities (MGT-415)	LEBANON
SEPT 24-25	Wide Area Search (PER-213)	FORT WAYNE
SEPT 24-25	ICS 400: Advanced ICS Command & General Staff	ANDERSON
SEPT 30 - OCT 2	Individual Assistance (IA)/Public Assistance (PA) and Damage Assessment Training	VALPARAISO

OCTOBER

OCT 1-2	Medical Management for CBRNE Events (PER-211)	ELKHART
OCT 8	Senior Officials Workshop for All Hazards Preparedness (MGT-312)	SOUTH BEND

UPCOMING EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

AUGUST 31

This day honors lives lost to overdose and raises awareness of prevention strategies. In Indiana, it is a call to action for public health and emergency services working to combat the opioid crisis.



INTERNATIONAL
OVERDOSE
AWARENESS DAY

NATIONAL HUNGER ACTION MONTH

SEPTEMBER

This month focuses on raising awareness about hunger in America and inspiring action to combat the problem. Many local fire departments are teaming up with Kroger this month to host food drives for their communities.



SEPTEMBER
HUNGER
ACTION
—MONTH—



NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

SEPTEMBER

National Preparedness Month encourages individuals and families in Indiana to make emergency plans, build kits and stay informed. It supports the state's ongoing mission to build resilient communities.

Visit and share [GetPrepared.in.gov](https://getprepared.in.gov) to encourage your communities to take action so they have a plan when the worst happens.

NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION MONTH

SEPTEMBER

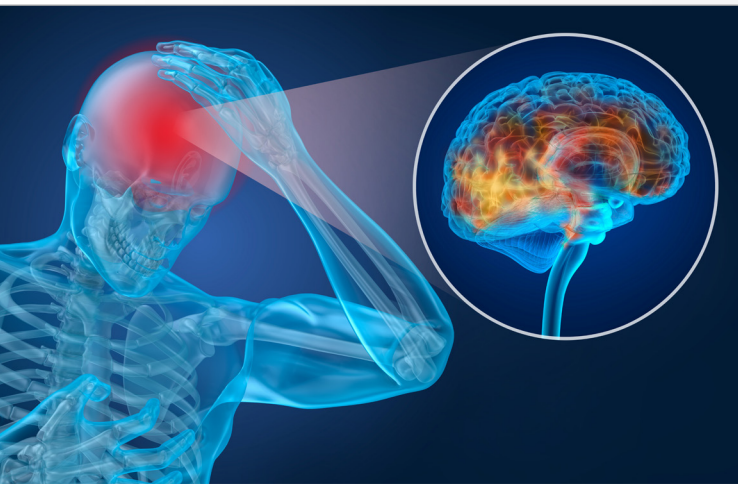
National Food Safety Education Month spreads awareness about foodborne illnesses and safe food handling practices. It supports Indiana's public health goals by helping residents and food service workers prevent contamination and illness.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUICIDE AWARENESS MONTH SEPTEMBER

Observed each September, this month promotes mental health awareness and suicide prevention resources. Providing mental/behavioral health resources is essential for Indiana's first responders and public safety professionals who face high-stress environments.

Visit the [IDHS First Responder Behavioral Health webpage](#) to learn more about how mental health affects Hoosier responders and how to get help.



CONCUSSION AWARENESS DAY SEPTEMBER 19

This day highlights the signs, symptoms and long-term effects of concussions. Concussion awareness is critical for Indiana's athletes, parents, coaches and first responders who may encounter head injuries in sports or emergencies.

NATIONAL CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK SEPTEMBER 21-27

This week highlights the importance of using car seats, boosters and seatbelts correctly to reduce traffic injuries and fatalities among children. In Indiana, it supports law enforcement and community programs focused on safe travel for kids.



CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH OCTOBER

Cybersecurity Awareness Month emphasizes online safety and protecting critical systems from cyberattacks. It supports Indiana's infrastructure and public safety by encouraging stronger digital defenses for individuals, businesses and agencies.



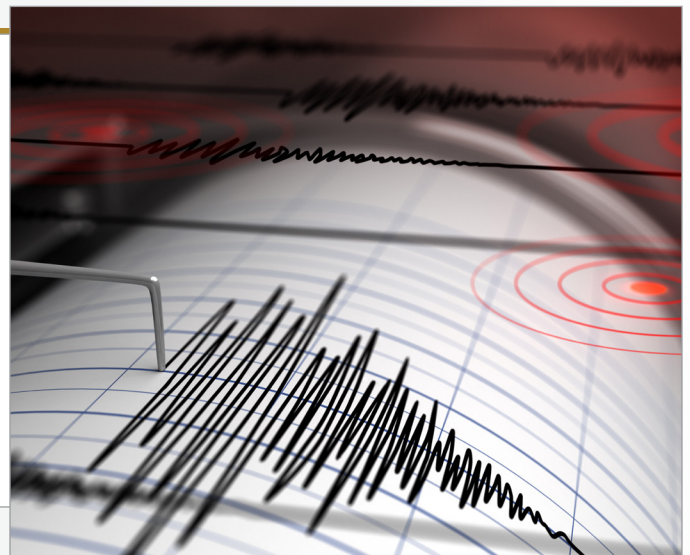
NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION WEEK OCTOBER 5-11

Each October, this week educates Hoosiers on fire hazards, the use of smoke alarms and escape planning. It helps reduce fire deaths and injuries in homes and schools across Indiana. As of July, [fire fatalities](#) are down from prior years, but the number of fires increase during colder months. Safety and education will help keep this number low.

GREAT SHAKEOUT OCTOBER 16

Held each October, the ShakeOut teaches "Drop, Cover and Hold On" to help people safely respond to earthquakes.

While Indiana is not known for frequent quakes, the state lies within a seismic zone, making preparedness essential.



Working for Hoosiers to provide a safe, secure and resilient Indiana.



Indiana Department of Homeland Security
302 West Washington Street • Indiana Government Center South • Room E208
Indianapolis, IN 46204 • 317.232.2222 • 800.669.7362



The Hoosier Responder is a publication of The Indiana Department of Homeland Security.
Please direct any questions or comments to the IDHS Office of Public Affairs at 317.234.6713 or pio@dhs.in.gov